

Appendix L

Recreation Setting Characteristics Class Rating Method

Matrix characteristics rating from least developed (1) primitive lands, through relative levels of backcountry (2); middle country (3); front country (4); rural (5); to most urbanized (6) on physical, social, and operational components of recreation, as described in Appendix M. Alternative A is not included as there is no current rating; management most closely follows ratings identified for Alternative B.

	Fort Meade			Exemption Area			Fossil Cycad			Cedar Canyon, ½ Mile Buffer on Sagebrush, Adj. to Battle Mtn, Dogie Butte, Bluff View, East of Newell, Two Rivers			Planning Area		
	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D
Physical															
Remoteness	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3
Naturalness	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	3	3	3
Facilities	5	5	5	4	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Social															
Contacts	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Group Size	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Evidence of Use	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3
Operational															
Access	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	2-3	2-3	3	3	3
Visitor Services	4-5	4-5	4-5	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Management Controls	5	5	5	5	4	5	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
RSC Rating	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
RSC Class	Front Country	Front Country	Front Country	Front Country	Middle Country	Front Country	Back Country	Back Country	Back Country	Middle Country	Back Country	Middle Country	Middle Country	Middle Country	Middle Country

	Alternative B (approximate acres)	Alternative C (approximate acres)	Alternative D (approximate acres)
Back Country	313	178,163	313
Middle Country	261,325	88,539	261,325
Front Country	11,655	6,591	11,655

Source: P:\SouthDakotaFO\Projects\SDFO_RMP\24K\Recreation\Visual_Resource_Management(VRM)\VRM_SD_RMP

Discussion: Fort Meade RSC class did not change between action alternatives due to the proximity of the city of Sturgis, the desires of the community to use the area, and the existing or potential facilities. Facilities will be maintained throughout the alternatives. The Fort Meade ACEC would be managed to provide a front country experience.

The Exemption Area would show some changes due to the alternative selected. Alternatives B and D would concentrate on development of the recreation use in the Exemption Area by designating it as a SRMA. The increase in development and access would be more in keeping with a front country class, increasing contacts, evidence of use, facilities, and visitor services. Access may change and become more structured, with designated single type use. Trails may be developed. It is likely there would be more management controls and visitor services in a designated SRMA. Alternative C does not encourage development, since the SRMA is not designated. The setting characteristic would be retained at middle country under Alternative C.

The Fossil Cycad ACEC would not change classifications between alternatives. The highway goes through the site so opportunities to favor remoteness and reduce contacts are limited, but further development is undesirable. Cattle grazing leasing would continue under all alternatives. Recreation setting would be retained as Back Country under all alternatives.

The areas listed in the columns between Fossil Cycad and Planning Area were identified by BLM staff as somewhat unique and as possibilities to manage for a more natural and isolated experience. They do not possess wilderness characteristics, but may provide an unusual recreation setting. Where vehicle travel may be limited or prohibited in subsequent travel management decisions, the recreation opportunities would change. The decreased road facilities, evidence of use, and mechanized use emphasized under Alternative C would result in more Back Country characteristics. Under Alternative D it is likely there would be some decrease in vehicle travel routes in some areas, but overall the characteristics would best match Middle Country.

The remainder of the planning area would not change overall recreation settings between alternatives, and would remain Middle Country.